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AUTHOR	Huang, Joe
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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides: (1) background information on the traditional celebration of the Chinese New Year and on the Chinese New Year Festival as celebrated in the United States; (2) a three day lesson plan which focuses, respectively, on the Chinese New Year Festival in San Francisco, a field trip to San Francisco's Chinatown, and the Chinese Lunar Calendar; and (3) an appendix of additional reading materials and resources. (EB)

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A Different New Year

Chinese New Year

Teacher's Handbook

Chinese Culture Foundation

Chinese American Ethnic Heritage Project

San Francisco, California

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A Different New Year

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword iii

1. Introduction..... 1

2. Background Information for Teachers
   a. Traditional Celebration of the Chinese New Year..... 3
   b. The Chinese New Year Festival as seen in the United States.... 7

3. Lesson Plans
   a. "A Different New Year" (slide-cassette show)..... 11
   b. Field Trip to San Francisco Chinatown..... 13
   c. The Chinese Lunar Calendar..... 16

4. Appendix
   a. Script for "A Different New Year"..... 23
   b. "Chinese New Year in Old China" (story)..... 27
   c. Description of display objects commonly seen at Chinese New Year time..... 31
   d. Resource Guide..... 34
   e. Lunar Calendar Animal Chart..... 37
   f. Lunar Calendar horoscopes..... 38

FOREWORD

The heritage of the American people is none other than the coming together of rich cultures of all the peoples of varied races who have built this land through their labor and often unfulfilled, but unvanquished hopes. Very little of this reality, however, is reflected in our text books. When stories of non-white peoples do occur, they are usually distorted beyond recognition.

Our basis for teaching Chinese heritage is not as a foreign culture, but as a culture which, brought over by early Chinese immigrants, has been inseparably woven into the fabric of American culture. As such, this series is meant to be used by all American students and not relegated to Chinese American students only.

The Chinese American Heritage Studies Project conducted teacher training workshops in (1) Chinese Music, (2) Foods and (3) Tai-chi Chuan, which were participated by thirty five teachers from thirteen secondary schools. Through their input, teaching packets in the above subjects were developed. In addition, audio-visual units in Chinese New Year and Chinese Music (video tape) and Display Panels in Chinese Art and Inventions have also been produced.

During this project, we were fortunate to be able to utilize the ethnic talents of artists, specialists and community resources concentrated at the Chinese Culture Center. The instructional materials presented in this series are by no means meant to be comprehensive. We hope that we have made a beginning upon which others will build.

Dr. Shirley Sun
Project Director

This manual has been developed by the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project of the Chinese Culture Foundation under a grant OEG No. 0-75-1332.

Requests for information concerning this manual or the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project should be addressed to:

Chinese Culture Foundation
750 Kearny Street
San Francisco, California 94108

This teacher's guide was written by Joe Huang.

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Artwork by Angela Chan

Graphics by Chester Fong

Ethnic Heritage Studies Project

Project Director: Dr. Shirley Sun
Project Coordinator: Joe Huang

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I. INTRODUCTION

There has been a great deal of interest on the part of school teachers within the recent years to present information on the Chinese New Year festival as part of a multicultural education program. So far, most of the available curriculum material on the Chinese New Year are at the elementary school level. This teacher's guide, produced as part of the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project of the Chinese Culture Foundation, is an effort to develop teaching materials on this festival suitable for use in secondary schools.

This teacher's guide is divided into three parts - background information for teachers, a three-day lesson plan, and an appendix with reading materials and a resource guide. Although this booklet was developed in conjunction with a 15-minute slide-cassette presentation, "A Different New Year" and incorporates the slide show in its lesson plans, the materials are also useable by themselves. Teachers wishing additional information on this slide show, as well as on other curriculum materials produced by the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project, may contact the Chinese Culture Foundation, 750 Kearny Street, San Francisco 94108. Tel.: (415) 986-1822.

Comments, criticisms, and suggestions to this teacher's guide are welcome.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

A. Traditional Celebration of the Chinese New Year

B. The Chinese New Year Festival as seen in the United States

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

1. Traditional Celebration of the Chinese New Year

Of all the traditional Chinese festivals, the New Year was perhaps the most elaborate, colorful, and important. This was a time for the Chinese to congratulate each other and themselves on having passed through another year, a time to finish out the old, and to welcome in the new year. Common expressions heard at this time are: guonian to have made it through the old year, and bainian to congratulate the new year.

The Chinese New Year is celebrated on the first day of the First Moon of the lunar calendar. The corresponding date in the solar calendar varies from as early as January 21st to as late as February 19th. Chinese New Year, as the Western New Year, signified turning over a new leaf. Socially, it was a time for family reunions, and for visiting friends and relatives. This holiday, more than any other Chinese holiday, stressed the importances of family ties. The Chinese New Year's Eve dinner gathering was among the most important family occasions of the year.

Preparations for the Chinese New Year in old China started well in advance of the New Year's Day. The 20th of the Twelfth Moon was set aside for the annual housecleaning, or the "sweeping of the grounds". Every corner of the house must be swept and cleaned in preparation for the new year. Spring Couplets, written in black ink on large vertical scrolls of red paper, were put on the walls or on the sides of the gateways. These couplets, short poems written in Classical Chinese, were expressions of good wishes for the family in the coming year. In addition,

symbolic flowers and fruits were used to decorate the house, and colorful New Year pictures (nian hua) were placed on the walls (for more descriptions of the symbolisms of the flowers and fruits, see page 32 and 33.

After the house was cleaned it was time to bid farewell to the Kitchen God, or Zaowang. In traditional China, the Kitchen God was regarded as the guardian of the family hearth. He was identified as the inventor of fire, which was necessary for cooking and was also the censor of household morals. By tradition, the Kitchen God left the house on the 23rd of the last month to report to Heaven on the behavior of the family. At this time, the family did everything possible to obtain a favorable report from the Kitchen God. On the evening of the 23rd, the family would give the Kitchen God a ritualistic farewell dinner with sweet foods and honey. Some said this was a bribe, others said it sealed his mouth from saying bad things.

Free from the every-watchful eyes of the Kitchen God, who was supposed to return on the first day of the New Year, the family now prepared for the upcoming celebrations. In old China, stores closed shop on the last two or three days of the year and remained closed for the first week of the New Year. Consequently, families were busy in the last week of the old year stocking up on foods and gifts. Chinese New Year presents are similar in spirit to Christmas presents, although the Chinese tended more often to give food items, such as fruits and tea. The last days of the old year was also the time to settle accumulated debts.

After the shopping rush ended, storekeepers and creditors made a great effort to collect their bills. This was a tense and often tragic time for those unable to meet their debts. Creditors often stalked their prey through the streets, or would even camp out on doorsteps to insist on immediate payment. Some people who could not pay their debts would simply disappear for the few days before the New Year's Day brought a long grace period.

On the last day of the old year, everyone was busy either in preparing food for the next two days, or in going to the barbers and getting tidied up for the New Year's Day. Tradition stipulated that all food be prepared before the New Year's Day, so that all sharp instruments, such as knives and scissors, could be put away to avoid cutting the "luck" of the New Year. The kitchen and well were not to be disturbed on the first day of the Year.

The New Year's Eve and New Year's Day celebrations were strictly family affairs. All members of the family would gather for the important family meal on the evening of the New Year's Eve. Even if a family member could not attend, an empty seat would be kept to symbolize that person's presence at the banquet. At midnight following the banquet, the younger members of the family would bow and pay their respects to their parents and elders.

On New Year's Day, the children were given lai-see, good luck money wrapped in little red envelopes. On New Year's day, everyone had on new clothes, and would put on his best behavior. It was considered improper to tell a lie, raise one's voice, use indecent language, or break anything on the first day of the year.

Starting from the second day, people began going out to visit friends and relatives, taking with them gifts and lai-see for the children. Visitors would be greeted with traditional New Year delicacies, such as melon seeds, candied fruits, and niangao, New Year cakes.

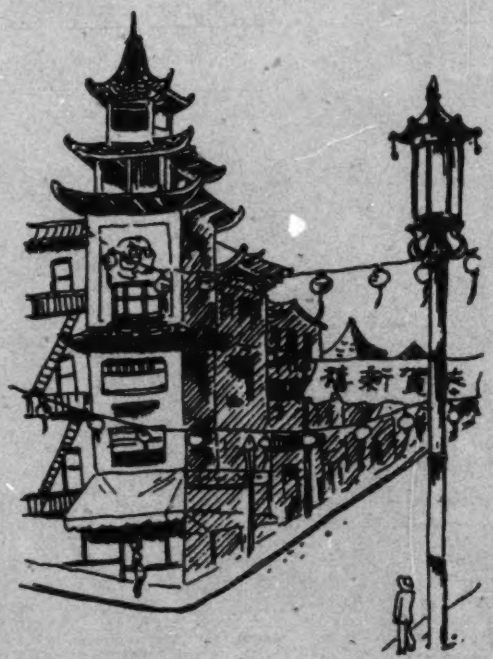
The entire first week was a time for socializing and amusement. On the streets, the stores were closed and an air of gaiety prevailed. There were numerous lion dances, acrobats, theatrical shows, and other diversions. Firecrackers, which symbolized driving away evil spirits, were heard throughout the first two weeks of the New Year. The Seventh Day of the New Year was called "everybody's birthday", as everyone was considered one year older as of that date.*

The New Year celebrations ended on the 15th of the First Moon with the Lantern Festival. On the evening of that day, people carried lanterns into the streets to take part in a great parade. Young men would highlight the parade with a dragon dance. The dragon was made of bamboo, silk, and paper, and might stretch for more than a hundred feet in length. The bobbing and weaving of the dragon was an impressive sight, and formed a fitting finish to the New Year festival.

*In traditional China, individual birthdays were not considered as important as the New Year's date. Everyone added a year to his age at New Year's time rather than at his birthdate.

2. The Chinese New Year Festival as seen in the United States

The Chinese New Year celebrations in San Francisco Chinatown and other Chinese American communities should not be interpreted as direct transplants of Chinese culture. Due to differences in their social environment and physical limitations, these local celebrations have developed special characteristics of their own. Along with old customs imported directly from China, the Chinatown celebrations also contain adaptations from other cultures in the United States.



The first point to be noticed in comparing the Chinatown celebrations of today to that described in the preceeding section is that they have been shortened or simplified. Chinese American stores in this country do not close for a week to celebrate, nor is it likely that a Chinese American could take two weeks off from work. Therefore, many of the festivities have been adapted for the evenings or the weekends. This includes the social visits, the family dinners, and even the Chinatown parade, which is always held on a Saturday. In many Chinese American homes, the annual housecleaning is still done at New Year's time. Spring Couplets can be seen in Chinatown stores everywhere, but these are now bought from the Chinese Hospital as a fundraising effort - an interesting variation on an old Chinese custom.

In addition to the Spring Couplets, the Chinatown lion dances have also been

promoted as a fundraising event for the Chinese Hospital. In the earlier days of Chinatown, lion dances were relatively rare. In the 1920's, a fundraising program was started whereby lion dancers would go from store to store to dance and wish them luck. In return, storekeepers would give lai-see packets which were donated to the Chinese Hospital.

The Chinatown parade is a blend of typical American marching parades and the traditional Lantern Festival. Although the dragon dance is adopted from the Chinese celebration, the rest of the Chinatown parade, including the beauty pageant, floats, and marching bands, was obviously inspired by non-Chinese models. The parade was first started in 1953 by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and has since attracted thousands of spectators each year.

Some Chinatown festivities also reflect the earlier history of Chinese Americans. Prior to the present generation, the Chinese American community was essentially a bachelor society. Restrictive immigration laws had made it extremely difficult for Chinese families to emigrate to the United States. As a result, most Chinese Americans in the past were not able to hold family dinners at New Year's time. In place of the family banquets, Chinatown developed a unique tradition of Spring Banquets hosted by the "family associations" * in certain Chinese restaurants. These Spring Banquets, originally developed to take the place of family dinners, are still held today, even though Chinatown is no longer a society of single men.

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* Family associations, organized according to family surnames, such as the Wong Family Association, etc., are social clubs or lodges which were first set up in Chinatown to serve the social and personal needs of Chinese workers.

LESSON PLANS

A. "A Different New Year" (slide-cassette show)

B. Field Trip to San Francisco Chinatown

C. The Chinese Lunar Calendar

One-Day Lesson: A DIFFERENT NEW YEAR

Recommended Materials: 1. Slide-cassette presentation "A Different New Year", available from the Chinese Culture Center.

2. Story, "Chinese New Year in the Old World" (Appendix B)

Basic Concepts of the New Year:

a. Sweeping Out the Old, Welcoming in the New -
Old business from the past year is cleared up, while a fresh start is made for the new year. This is symbolized by house-cleaning, and by renewing old friendships.

b. Family Celebrations -
Chinese New Year is foremost a family occasion, a time for relatives to be together for the beginning of another year.

When discussing the folklore around Chinese New Year, remember that often the social and human value of many customs are far more important than their face value. In other words, customs may be retained for their color and interest, and not because people actually believe them. For example, few people in this country believe in Santa Claus, but the story is repeated every Christmas. Therefore, care should be taken not to give the impression of superstitious belief.

Lesson:

1. Show the cassette-slide presentation, "A Different New Year".

This 20-minute presentation on the Chinese New Year festival is based on the celebrations in San Francisco's Chinatown. It gives a brief description of the history of the Chinese New Year celebration, the basis of the lunar calendar, how the festival has changed for the Chinese in this country, and the significance of this festival for Chinese Americans. The script of this show is given in Appendix A.

2. Suggested Classroom Activities:

   a. Discuss the difference between China and Chinese Americans.

      China is a foreign country. Chinese Americans originally came here from China, and although they have many ties to China in terms of history, culture, and language, Chinese Americans are citizens of the United States.

   b. What is the Chinese New Year celebration as seen in the slide presentation? Is it "a bit of old China" or is it an American product?

      Mention the changes that the Chinese New Year celebration has undergone since Chinese immigrants first came to this country more than 100 years ago. Point out that this Chinese American festival is no more foreign to the United States than other festivals such as Halloween or St. Patrick's Day, which were also brought here by immigrants, but have since been modified by the American experience.

3. If there is any time left, have students read "Chinese New Year in the Old World", a first-hand account of how Chinese New Year was celebrated in old China more than 50 years ago. This story can serve both as a preparation for the Chinatown walk the following day, as well as a discussion topic for comparing this festival to other festivals around the world.

   Have students compare such activities as announcing the arrival of the God of Fortune (page 27, 3rd paragraph) to trick-or-treat during Halloween. What about "selling laziness" (page 27, last paragraph)?

One-Day Lesson:

FIELD TRIP TO CHINATOWN AT CHINESE NEW YEAR TIME

The most convenient way to conduct a field trip to Chinatown is to arrange it with an organization that offers such tours. For assistance in arranging for Chinatown walks, look in the resource guide in Appendix D.

The ideal walk of Chinatown at New Year's time should cover the basic economic, social, cultural, and historical background of Chinatown and Chinese-Americans, while, at the same time, highlighting some of the special New Year activities and displays.

Although it is beyond the scope of this teacher's guide to give a comprehensive walk itinerary for exploring Chinatown, teachers should keep in mind these general points:

1. Economic Background - Chinatown is a ghetto; although surrounded by some of the wealthiest districts of San Francisco, the average income of Chinatown residents is very substandard. Jobs are low paying and housing is very scarce in Chinatown.

2. Social Background - Chinatown is a stop-over place for immigrants from Hong Kong and the rest of Asia. Although Chinatown physically has a look of antiquity to it, many of its residents are actually recent immigrants. Those who have "made it" move out of Chinatown, while those who still struggle against language problems and cultural barriers stay in Chinatown.

3. Cultural Background - Chinatown serves as a focus for many Chinese American communities around the Bay Area. Here one can find grocery

stores, movie houses, and restaurants which service Chinese Americans from all over.

4. Historical Background - Chinatown developed because of the extreme discrimination against Chinese up until the 1940's. As late as thirty years ago, Chinese Americans were restricted by housing discrimination and physical assault from moving past the boundaries of Powell, Bush, Columbus, and Broadway Streets. In the past twenty years, Chinese have been gradually moving out to other parts of San Francisco and the Bay Area, reducing the high concentration of Chinese in Chinatown.

SPECIAL CHINESE NEW YEAR ITEMS (see Appendix C for explanations)

1. Spring Couplets on almost all stores in Chinatown.

2. Fat Ming, and Chew Chong Tai are both worth looking into at New Year's time.

   Fat Ming (903 Grant Avenue) has a large display of lai-see packets in their window.

   Chew Chong Tai (905 Grant Avenue) has a large number of New Year posters, and Spring Couplets for sale.

3. The China Trade Center (839 Grant) has an elaborate dragon head in its stairway. The dragon dance traditionally takes place at the end of the New Year celebrations. (For information on dragon dance, see "Chinese New Year Resource Material", listed in Appendix D.)

4. Flowers - if the timing is right, students may be able to see temporary

flower stalls on Grant Avenue and some side streets. These stalls are set up for a few days around the New Year's Day to meet the great demand for flowers to decorate the house.

5. Chinese Culture Center, 750 Kearny Street, 3rd floor, will often have special New Year displays, including a Lion's head for the lion dance, and New Year foods and home settings.

6. Groceries and special foods - The food industry is one of the major occupations of Chinatown. Chinese groceries stress fresh produce and will have vegetables and fruits in open-air stalls, much in the manner of traditional Chinese markets. At New Year's time, watch for the large numbers of oranges, tangerines, and pomelos for sale. These citrus fruits are all symbolic of the New Year season.

   Sweetmeats used to fill the chuen-hop, or "tray of togetherness", and can be seen at Chong Imports, at 838 Grant Avenue. These sweetmeats include dried watermelon seeds, wintermelon slices, sugared coconut, peanuts, dried lychees and lotus roots. Notice that all these items are organic and naturally preserved.

   Steam pudding, or niangao is a special food at New Year's time. Many Chinese pastry shops, such as Jay's Chee Kee at 752 Jackson, or Eastern Bakery at 720 Grant Avenue, will have these for sale.

One Day Lesson: THE CHINESE CALENDAR

The topic for this lesson is the Chinese Lunar Calendar, which is the basis for determining the date of the Chinese New Year's day.

Important concepts in regards to the Chinese Lunar Calendar are:

1. The Chinese animal signs are a 12-year cycle used for dating the years. They represent a cyclical concept of time, rather than the Western linear concept of time.

2. The Chinese Lunar Calendar is based on the cycles of the moon, and is constructed in a different fashion than the Western solar calendar. Students should be aware that there is no natural reason for taking January 1st as the beginning of a year, and that in the Chinese calendar the beginning of the year falls somewhere between late January and early February.

3. The Chinese have adopted the Western calendar since 1911, but the lunar calendar is still used for festive occasions such as the Chinese New Year. Many Chinese calendars will print both the solar dates and the Chinese lunar dates.

The Animal Signs: Background Information

In the United States, the years are dated from the birth of Jesus Christ, for example, 1977 means 1,977 years after the birth of Christ. This represents a linear perception of time, with time proceeding in a straight line from the past to the present and the future. In traditional China, dating methods were cyclical, cyclical meaning something that is repeated time after time according to a pattern. A popular folk method which reflected this cyclical method of recording years are the Twelve Animal

Signs. Every year is assigned an animal name or "sign" according to a repeating cycle: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Ram, Monkey, Chicken, Dog, and Pig. Therefore, every twelve years the same animal name or "sign" would reappear. The signs for the next 24 years are:

Year of the Dragon	1976	1988
Year of the Snake	1977	1989
Year of the Horse	1978	1990
Year of the Sheep	1979	1991
Year of the Monkey	1980	1992
Year of the Chicken	1981	1993
Year of the Dog	1982	1994
Year of the Pig	1983	1995
Year of the Rat	1984	1996
Year of the Ox	1985	1997
Year of the Tiger	1986	1998
Year of the Rabbit	1987	1999

A cultural sidelight of the animal signs in Chinese folklore is that horoscopes have developed around the animal signs, much like monthly horoscopes in the West have been developed for the different moon signs, Pisces, Aries, etc. For example, a Chinese horoscope may predict that a person born in the Year of the Horse would be, "cheerful, popular, and loves to compliment others". These horoscopes are amusing, but not regarded seriously by the Chinese people. A sample horoscope can be found in the appendix.

The animal signs also serve a useful social function for finding out people's ages. Instead of asking directly how old a person is, in China people often ask what is his or her animal sign. This would place that person's age within a cycle of 12 years, and with a bit of common sense, we can deduce the exact age. For example, a person born in the Year of the Rabbit will, in 1977 (Year of the Snake), be either 2, 14, 26, 38, 50, 62, or 74. More often, though, people ask for animal signs not to compute a person's exact numerical age, but to simply know who is older among

friends and acquaintances.

LEGEND:

According to Chinese legend, the twelve animals quarreled one day as to who was to head the cycle of years. The gods were asked to decide and they held a contest: whoever was to reach the opposite bank of the river would be first, and the rest of the animals would receive their years according to their finish.

All the twelve animals gathered at the river bank and jumped in. Unknown to the ox, the rat had jumped upon his back. As the ox was about to jump ashore, the rat jumped off the ox's back, and won the race. The pig, who was very lazy, ended up last. That is why the rat is the first year of the animal cycle, the ox second, and the pig last.

Suggested Discussion Topics and Student Activities:

1. Ask students to calculate in which animal year they would be twenty-one, forty, or sixty-five.

2. Hand out the animal signs for different people. Let the class figure out their ages.

3. Have the students look at the animals used for the zodiac animal signs. Can they make any deductions about agriculture and wildlife in ancient China?

   Of the twelve animals, six are domesticated (horse, sheep, chicken, ox, dog, and pig), five are wild (snake, monkey, rat, tiger, and rabbit), and one is mythological (dragon). Note the absence of animals not native to ancient China...such as the elephant or lion.

4. Have the students look at the sample horoscope in the appendix. Do they see any resemblance between the traits listed, and the traits generally associated in this country with that animal? Are there any parallels in other cultures in attributing certain human traits to different animals? Mention common American cliches, such as "stubborn as a mule", "trusty old dog", etc. Emphasize that human perceptions of animals are often cultural, the snake being considered a good luck symbol in China. In addition, it should be noted that there is no onus attached to any of the years, be it the Year of the Rat, or the Year of the Pig.

5. The following exercise is an interesting mathematical computation using basic astronomical data to show that the Chinese lunar calendar is very scientific and accurate.

In old China, accurate determination of the calendar was an important task for court astronomers, since the emperor must know the coming of the seasons and other natural phenomena. Chinese astronomers as early as 800 B.C. were able to determine the length of the solar year to be 365 1/4 days, and to predict the motion of the planets, and solar eclipses. The Chinese lunar calendar is actually a combination solar-lunar calendar. The months are set according to the lunar cycles, but extra months are added periodically to make the years correspond to the true length of the solar year. Whereas the Gregorian calendar adds a leap day every fourth year, the Chinese lunar calendar adds an extra month for seven years out of every 19. The following computation will demonstrate that these corrections produce a very accurate calendar.

Tell students or assign them to look up the exact periods of revolution for the earth around the sun, and the moon around the earth.

Answers: Earth around sun - 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes =
365.26 days

Moon around earth - 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes =
29.53 days

Since the Chinese lunar calendar is made up of 12 lunar months, what would be the length of the regular Chinese lunar year?

Answer: 12 x 29.53 days = 354.36 days

This is almost 11 days short of the true solar year. To correct for this difference, on seven years out of every 19 year cycle the Chinese astronomers added an extra month, called the "moon made up of the remnant of odd days". What would be the length of these years with 13 months?

Answer: 13 x 29.53 = 383.89

Taking this into account, what would be the average length of the Chinese year over every 19-year cycle?

Answer: 12 years of 354.36 days = 4252.32 days
7 years of 383.89 days = 2687.23 days
6939.55 days ÷ 19 = 365.24 days

This compares very closely to the actual astronomical length of 365.26 days, with an error of only 0.4%. (This relationship of 235 moons to 19 years was also discovered by the ancient Greeks, who thought it so important that they engraved it in gold on the Temple of Athena as a formula.)

6. The Western calendars (Julian and Gregorian) lengthened each month to 30 or 31 days. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this? (The Western calendar always has twelve months, but, each month does not correspond to any visible natural phenomena.)

7. Are there any other calendars which use the moon as the base? The Islamic calendar, and the Hebrew calendar are both lunar. The Islamic calendar is a completely lunar calendar, with every year having twelve months totaling 354 days. Does such a calendar correspond to the seasons? (The Islamic calendar will sometimes have the New Year in the winter, and sometimes in the summer.)

8. In traditional China, the majority of the population did not know how to read. In addition, communications were generally very poor. Can you think why the Chinese Lunar Calendar was very well suited for such a situation?

APPENDICES

A. Script for "A Different New Year"

B. "Chinese New Year in Old China (story)

C. Description of display object commonly seen at Chinese New Year time

D. Resource Guide

E. Lunar Calendar Animal Chart

F. Lunar Calendar horoscopes

APPENDIX A:

Script for "A Different New Year"

(Slide-cassette show available through the Chinese Culture Center, 750 Kearny Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94108-Tel. (415) 986-1822)

Chinese New Year is what many people in this country call the beginning of the new year on the Chinese lunar calendar. In Chinese, we call this important festival sun-nien, which means simply, "New Year", or, chun-jik, which means, "the Spring Festival". Mention Chinese New Year, and people often think of firecrackers, lion dances, and, of course, the Chinatown parade.

Although these events add color and pageantry to the Chinese New Year, they are only a part of the entire festival. They represent the public celebrations, much like the Rose Parade is always linked to the Western New Year. However colorful, these events do not tell us what this occasion means to the Chinese-Americans, why they are celebrating, or what they share in common with other people througout Asia who also celebrate this occasion.

Some people have said that Chinese New Year is like Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Fourth of July, all rolled up into one big festival. We can see similarities. Like Christmas, this is the time for season's greetings and exchanging presents. Like Thanksgiving, this is the occasion for the family dinner. And, like the Fourth of July, this is the time for celebration and fireworks.

The roots of the Chinese New Year festival are deep. The early Chinese immigrants who first celebrated it in this country were continuing a tradition that had been carried on for centuries. As early as 1851, these celebrations attracted the attention of other Americans in San Francisco. A local paper in that year said,

"Norman Assing, the well-known chief of the Chinese, gave a grand feast on Saturday night at his private house in celebration of the birth of the Chinese new year. A number of the policemen of our city, and many ladies and Chinese were present."

In the one hundred some years since 1851, the Chinese New Year celebrations in the United States have evolved and changed. The festival that we see in places like San Francisco Chinatown today is neither the same as that of old China, or of current China. It is a unique American product, reflecting both its Chinese past, and its American present.

The date for the New Year is determined by the Chinese lunar calendar. This calendar is called lunar because it follows the cycles of the moon. In this Chinese calendar, there is a new moon at the beginning of each month, and a full moon to mark the middle of each month. Chinese New Year's Day is the first day of the first month of the Chinese lunar calendar, and falls on different days of the Western calendar for different years.

To understand the meaning of this festival, we must look at China, the country from which the Chinese Americans came. China was an agricultural country. Life was closely tied to the cycles of planting and harvesting. The New Year festival, coming after the autumn harvest and before the start of Spring, marks the end of one and the beginning of a new farming year.

Even for Chinese Americans now living in the cities, this season is still remembered as a time to sweep out the old, and welcome in the new. For many homes, time is taken to clean and decorate the house thoroughly. Flowers are used a great deal in decorations, and sidewalk flower stalls appear suddenly at New Year's time in Chinatown. Each flower carries its own significance. The plum blossom, which appears in the cold winter

on a leafless branch, has come to symbolize longevity and courage. The water narcissus is another popular New Year flower. There are all sorts of fruits and special New Year foods, some traditional and some Western. These also carry their own meanings. Oranges and tangerines are favorites, because in Chinese the word for orange sounds like "wealth", and the word for tangerine sounds like "good fortune". It's just another way of saying "best wishes".

The other function of this festival is to welcome in the new. Friends visit one another to bring them greetings for the coming year. Especially for children, this is the time for receiving lai-see, small red envelopes containing money which are given as New Year presents. For many families, the highlight of the New Year festival is the big family dinner, the one time of the year where everyone from the oldest down to the youngest can be together. Even if a family member cannot make this dinner, an empty seat is reserved in case he shows up.

In the streets of Chinatown, even a casual stroller will notice the extra noise and bustle. There are special window displays and decorations. Red is seen everywhere, for in China, red symbolizes happiness. Many stores put up Spring Couplets. These are short poems written on red paper wishing the stores good business for the coming year. For many days, you will hear lion dancers dancing in front of stores to the sound of gongs and firecrackers. They also convey good wishes for the stores.

The most publicized event of the Chinese New Year is, of course, the Chinatown parade. Although for centuries the Chinese have celebrated the New Year with a dancing dragon, the Chinatown parade is actually quite new. It is a combination of old and new, East and West, with marching bands and beauty queens. Although criticized for its commercial aspects, this parade has drawn thousands of participants and viewers each year, for many their only contact with the Chinese American community.

However, when we look at Chinese New Year, we should not let the pageantry cover the real essence of this festival. Chinese New Year means many things to many people. It can be a very personal moment, a time to reflect on the events of the past year and to plan ahead for the new; a time to relax with family and friends. More than anything, it is a celebration of life,of the successful conclusion of one year and bright hopes for another.

APPENDIX B:

Chinese New Year in the Old World

(This story was compiled through interviews with several elderly Chinese immigrants of San Francisco, and is a record of how the New Year festival was celebrated in the villages of old China more than 50 years ago. These elderly Chinese were from the Toishan district of Kwangtung Province, the area of China from which the majority of the Chinese Americans originated.)

" The lunar new year was the biggest festival of the year for the Chinese. The main idea behind Chinese New Year was to "choy-gaw-lup-sun" (Cantonese pronunciation), which means, to get rid of what's old and bad, and to prepare for the new and good. A good example of this idea was the "dai-so-choy", or big housecleaning. Our families used to do this every year about a week before new year's day. In the Toishan area, we called the housecleaning, "ah-fow-how-moy" or the cleaning of the ashes. In those days, we used coal or wood in the stoves to cook. The ashes built up over the months, and then during the housecleaning we would clean out the whole stove. So we called housecleaning, " the cleaning of the ashes".

" After the house was cleaned, all the families would put up fai-chon, or red characters. These were written on strips of red paper, with sayings like "happy new year", or even just a single word, like "luck", or "long life". People put these writings on the walls, and they hoped that they would bring luck for the new year.

" Around our area of the country we had a song that described the new year. It went:

The winter festival is in the eleventh month,
and the New Year is in the twelfth month.
Every family hangs out their red banners
the banners flutter brightly in the wind.
Every family makes jin-doy cakes,

the jin-doy cakes smell delicious.
Every family lights their firecrackers,
the firecrackers explode in red.
Every family sets out their lanterns,
the lanterns are bright.
We steam our fat-go cakes,
the fat-go cakes expand;
and we pray to the Buddha.

"The 24th of the 12th month was called the "night of the little year". That day was reserved for the Kitchen God, whom we called Joe Gwan . In the old kitchens, the stoves were made of brick with spaces for woks and pots. Above the stove there was a picture or statue of the Kitchen God. He was supposed to watch over the family and report on their behavior to the Jade Emperor in Heaven. After hearing this report, the Jade Emperor would decide who to punish and who to reward in the next year. A lot of us kids used to get scared of the Kitchen God, because people told us that he could see and hear everything. At new year's time, we put strips of red paper next to the Kitchen God with sayings like, " those who are moral can control the fire", and "if you're not selfish, heaven will know". On the night of the 23rd, the family would send off the Kitchen God on his annual trip to Heaven with offerings of food. We all hoped that he would say nice things about our family. After the send-off, the family would take down the food and have dinner, so none of the food was wasted.

"After the dinner, a lot of people liked to get their hair cut and washed. This was supposed to bring luck in the coming year. Other families tried to buy new clothes, especially for the children, so that everyone could wear new clothes on new year's day.

"In the last week of the old year, the women were very busy making special foods for the New Year's Eve banquet. One of the foods that

a lot of people liked to make was the jin-doy, which was a kind of cake that was fried. When they're fried, the cakes swell up in size. People felt that this would signify that their luck and fortunes would also increase in the next year.

"Food was also prepared for religious ceremonies. These were held for the Earth Gods, and for the family's ancestors on New Year's Eve. After bowing to the gods and to the ancestors, the whole family would get together for the banquet. This banquet was considered extremely important, because it might be the only chance that a whole family, including uncles and aunts, could get together at one time. Even if someone couldn't make it, an empty seat would still be saved. In our family, this feast had to be vegetarian, because we wanted to avoid killing animals on the eve of the New Year. In fact, around Toishan we'd eat vegetarian dishes for the first 2 days of the year.

"After the New Year's Eve banquet, there were a lot of fun things to do. Grown-ups would put money into red-envelopes, and give them to the kids. Sometimes mischievous kids from poor families would go to other people's door and shout, "the god of fortune has arrived". The people inside, since they naturally wanted to welcome fortune for the new year, would open the door, and then give some red envelopes to the children. It was all a game.

"Another interesting thing that some families did was to "sell laziness". You sell laziness by taking the children into the streets and "sell his laziness", so that in the new year he wouldn't be so lazy. They even had a song to go with it:

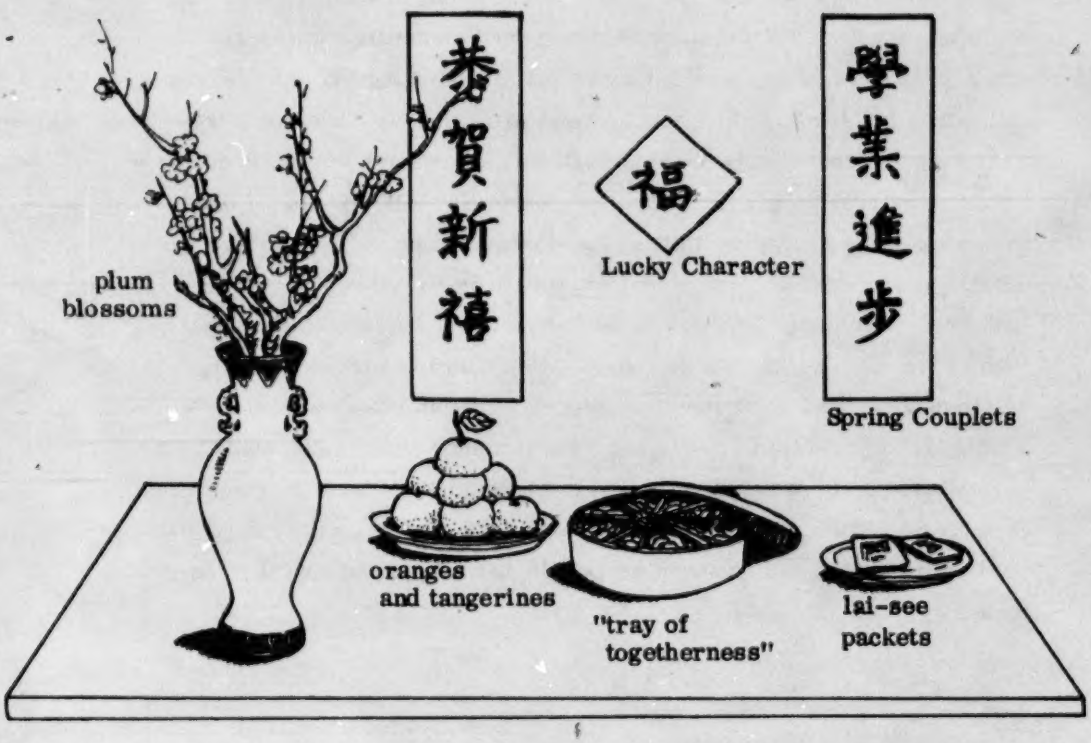
Selling laziness! Selling laziness!
Just before the New Year's Eve.
Selling dog fleas, selling wood termites,
just before the New Year's Day.

Since nobody wanted to get stuck with lazy kids, or fleas and termites, for the next year, no one would "buy" what was for sale!

"The festival continued for weeks even after New Year's Day. Most of the businesses were closed, and people went around visiting and wishing each other a prosperous new year. Families would go to other people's homes, and exchange gifts, like tangerines, oranges, and new year foods. The hosts would always have on hand a tray full of candy and sweets for the visitors. It wasn't so much a rowdy time, as a really happy, sociable season for all people. Nobody was supposed to say bad things, or do bad things. The children, especially, had a great time. Every house they'd go to, they collect little red envelopes with money. For weeks, you would also hear firecrackers going off all the time. The visiting and celebrating didn't used to end until the 15th, the day of the Lantern Dance. That's when we would have a big dragon dance that young men from the village would take part in. The whole festival was so good, that I've heard in other parts of China people didn't stop celebrating until the second month. I don't think people have the time for that anymore, though."

APPENDIX C:

Description of New Year display objects commonly seen in San Francisco Chinatown and other Chinese American communities.



1. Spring couplets:

Spring couplets are traditionally written with black ink on red paper. They are hung in storefronts in the month before the New Year's Day, and often stay up for two months. They express best wishes and fortune for the coming year. There is a great variety in the writing of these poetic couplets to fit the situation. A store would generally use couplets that make references to their line of trade. The couplets here are appropriate for a school, they say "happy new year", and "continuing advancement in education".

2. Lucky Character:

The single word fook , or fortune, is often displayed in many homes and stores. They are usually written by brush on a diamond-shaped piece of red paper.

3. Lai-see envelopes:

(also called Hong-bao) Money is placed in these envelopes and given to children and young adults at New Year's time, much in the spirit as Christmas presents. Presents are also often exchanged between families.

4. Sample Chinese Calendar:

The Chinese calendar will often show the dates of both the Gregorian (Western) calendar and the Chinese Lunar Calendar. The Gregorian dates are printed in Arabic numerals, and the Chinese dates in Chinese numerals.

5. Zodiac Chart:

The rotating cycle of twelve animal signs was a folk method for naming the years in traditional China. The animal signs for one another in an established order, and are repeated every twelve years. 1976 was the Year of the Dragon, 1977 the Year of the Snake.

6. Flowers:

Flowers are an important part of the New Year decorations. In old China, much use was made of natural products in celebrations as well as in daily life. The two flowers most associated with the New Year are the plum blossom and the water narcissus.

Plum blossoms stand for courage and hope. The blossoms burst forth at the end of winter on a seemingly lifeless branch. In Chinese art, plum blossoms are associated with the entire season of winter and not just the New Year.

The water narcissus is another flower that blossoms at New Year's time. If the white flowers blossom exactly on the day of the New Year, it is believed to indicate good fortune for the ensuing twelve months.

7. Tangerines, Oranges, and Pomelos:

Tangerines and oranges are frequently displayed in homes and stores. Tangerines are symbolic of good luck, and oranges are symbolic of wealth. These symbols have developed through a language pun, the word for tangerine having the same sound as "luck" in Chinese, and the word for orange having the same sound as "wealth". Pomelos are large pear-shaped grapefruits.

8. Tray of Togetherness:

Many families keep a tray full of dried fruits, sweets, and candies to welcome guests and relatives who drop by. This tray is called a chuen-hop, or "tray of togetherness". Traditionally, it was made up of eight compartments, each of which was filled with a special food item of significance to the New Year season.

APPENDIX D: Resource Guide

1. Curriculum Materials - All the following curriculum materials are primarily for elementary level classes. They are useful for additional ideas to supplement those given in this book.

a. Gung Hei Fat Choy, by Educational Development and Services, Oakland Unified School District, Oakland, California. 1971. 836-2622. x728. (elementary level) 67 pages. $1.50

A collection of curriculum ideas for elementary school classes, divided into three parts. Part I covers the historical background of Chinese Americans and background information on the New Year festival. Part II covers classroom activities-paper flowers, calligraphy, dragon dance, field trips, and recipes. Part III covers Chinese inventions, and cultural perceptions of Chinese-Americans. With bibliography and evaluation. Useful for both elementary and beginning secondary classes.

b. "Chinese New Year Resource Material", by Chinese Bilingual Pilot Project, ESEA Title VII, San Francisco Unified School District, Feb. 1972. (background information) 10 pp.; no cost.

A ten-page summary of the traditional Chinese New Year Festival; contains useful background information.

c. "Preparing for Chinese New Year", by Gordon Lew, Chinese Bilingual Pilot Project, San Francisco Unified School District. 567-5270. 15 pp. Title VII

A fifteen page picture book on the Chinese New Year, suitable only for 1st and 2nd grade classes.

d. "How to Celebrate Chinese New Year", compiled by Mayme Chinn, Chinese Bilingual Pilot Project, San Francisco Unified School District, 567-5270. 31 pp.; no cost.

e. Materials on Chinese New Year (untitled), by Yolanda Garfias Woo, ESEA I/S. B. 90 San Francisco Unified School District. 30 pp.

A curriculum guide with many activities, especially designed for classroom use at the elementary level. Activities cover animal signs, the lion dance, tangrams, and special reading and pronunciation activities utilizing Chinese cultural content.

2. Books on the Chinese New Year

a. Juliet Bredon and Igor Mitrophanow, The Moon Year, Shanghai: 1927, reprinted Paragon Book Reprint, Inc., N. Y. : L966; pp. 69-157.

A classic detailing traditional Chinese celebrations, the pages indicated gives a very detailed account of old Chinese New Year celebrations. The entire book also explains the cycle of a Chinese lunar year.

b. Eberhard, Wolfram, Chinese Festivals, Henry Schuman, Inc., N. Y., 1952.

c. Charter C. T. Chang, The Three Main Chinese Festivals, Taipei, Li-te Co., 1967, 57 pages.

Basic information on celebration of Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat, and Mid-autumn festivals in Taiwan.

d. A Cycle of Chinese Festivals, Malaysia Publishing House, Singapore, 1967.

3. Films-Diane Li Productions: "The Dragon Wore Tennis Shoes", an interesting ten-minute film on the Dragon Dance, shot in Chinatown.

4. Resource Centers in the Bay Area-Educational Institutions:

a. Chinese Culture Center, 750 Kearny Street, San Francisco, Telephone: 986-1822.

Volunteer speakers bureau, resource file on Chinese New Year, and docent-led tours through Chinatown San Francisco. Special New-Year walks held for school groups at New Year time, portable New Year displays.

b. Multicultural Resource Center, San Francisco Unified School District, 111 Ft. Mason, San Francisco; 441-2350.

Multicultural materials, teacher retraining.

c. Chinese Bilingual Project, ESEA, Title VII, 135 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco.

d. Baycep (Bay Area China Education Project), 8 Barrows Hall, University of California, Berkeley, 94720. 642-0402

Teaching units on calligraphy, and on China.

. Resource Centers in San Francisco for New Year display materials:

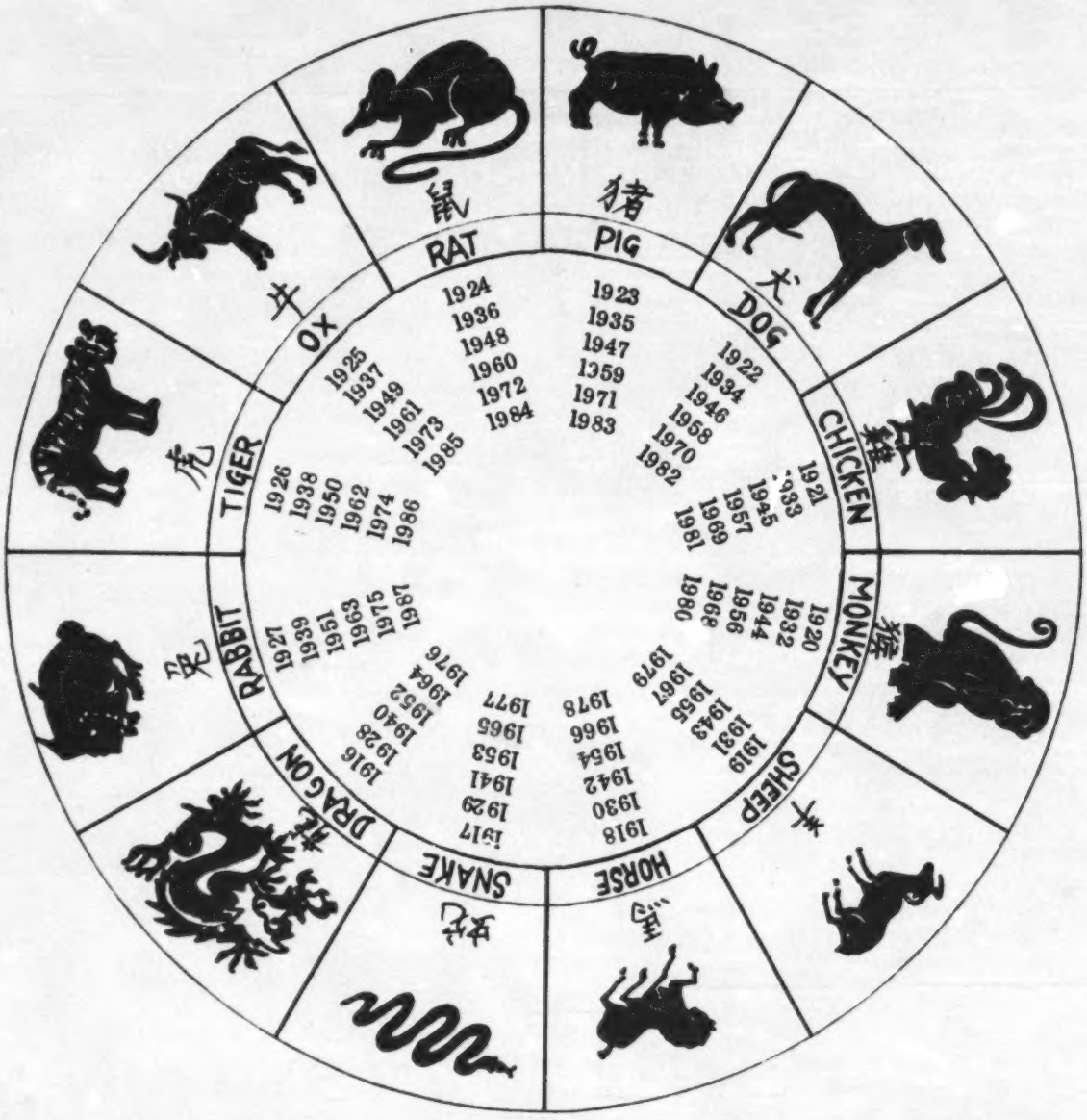
a. Chew Chong Tai, 905 Grant Avenue; for charts, posters, Spring Couplets, and Lucky Characters.

b. Fat Ming, 903 Grant Avenue; they have an excellent display of lai-see envelopes.

c. Tai Yuen, 740 Jackson St.; one of the oldest stores in Chinatown, they carry a great deal of religions and secular objects used by Chinese at New Year's time.

APPENDIX E

Chinese Lunar Calendar Zodiac Chart



APPENDIX F

Chinese Lunar Calendar Horoscopes

THE YEAR OF THE RAT: 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984

People born in these years are noted for their charm and attraction for the opposite sex. They work hard to achieve their goals, acquire possessions, and are likely to be perfectionists. They are basically thrifty with money. Rat people are easily angered and love to gossip. Their ambitions are big, and they are usually very successful. They are most compatible with people born in the years of the Dragon, Monkey and Ox.

THE YEAR OF THE OX: 1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985

People born in these years are patient, speak little, and inspire confidence in others. They tend, however, to be eccentric and bigoted, and they anger easily. They have fierce tempers and although they speak little, when they do they are quite eloquent. Ox people are mentally and physically alert. Generally easy-going, they can be remarkably stubborn, and they hate to fail or be opposed. They are most compatible with Snake, Cock, and Rat people.

THE YEAR OF THE TIGER: 1914, 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974

Tiger people are sensitive, given to deep thinking, capable of great sympathy They can be extremely short-tempered, however. Other people have great respect for them, but sometimes Tiger people come into conflict with older people or those in authority. Sometimes Tiger people cannot make up their minds, which can result in a poor, hasty decision or a sound decision arrived at too late. They are suspicious of others, but they are courageous and powerful. Tigers are most compatible with Horses, Dragons, and Dogs.

THE YEAR OF THE RABBIT: 1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975

People born in the year of the Rabbit are articulate, talented, and ambitious. They are virtuous, reserved, and have excellent taste. Rabbit people are admired, trusted, and are often financially lucky. They are fond of gossip but are tactful and generally kind. Rabbit people seldom lose their temper. They are clever at business and being conscientious, never back out of a contract. They would make good gamblers for they have the uncanny gift of choosing the right thing. However, they seldom gamble, as they are conservative and wise. They are most compatible with those born in the years of the Sheep, Boar, and Dog.

THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON: 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976

People born in this year are healthy, energetic, excitable, short-tempered, and stubborn. They are also honest, sensitive, brave, and they inspire confidence and trust. Dragon people are the most eccentric of any in the eastern zodiac. They neither borrow money nor make flowery speeches, but they tend to be soft-hearted which sometimes gives others an advantage over them. They are compatible with Rats, Snakes, Monkeys, and Cocks.

THE YEAR OF THE SNAKE: 1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977

People born in the Year of the Snake are deep. They say little and possess great wisdom. They never have to worry about money; they are financially fortunate. Snake people are often quite vain, selfish, and a bit stingy. Yet they have tremendous sympathy for others and try to help those less fortunate. Snake people tend to overdo, since they have doubts about other people's judgment and prefer to rely on themselves. They are determined in whatever they do and hate to fail. Although calm on the surface, they are intense and passionate. Snake people are usually good-looking and sometimes have marital problems because they are fickle. They are most compatible with the Ox and Cock.

THE YEAR OF THE HORSE: 1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978

People born in the Year of the Horse are popular. They are cheerful, skillful with money, and perceptive, although they sometimes talk too much. They are wise, talented, good with their hands, and sometimes have a weakness for members of the opposite sex. They are impatient and hot-blooded about everything except their daily work. They like entertainment and large crowds. They are very independent and rarely listen to advice. They are most compatible with Tigers, Dogs, and Sheep.

THE YEAR OF THE SHEEP: 1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979

People born in the Sheep Year are elegant and highly accomplished in the arts. They seem to be, at first glance, better off than those born in the zodiac's other years. But Sheep Year people are often shy, pessimistic, and puzzled about life. They are usually deeply religious, yet timid by nature. Sometimes clumsy in speech, they are always passionate about what they do and what they believe in. Sheep people never have to worry about having the best in life for their abilities make money for them, and they are able to enjoy the creature comforts that they like. Sheep people are wise, gentle, and compassionate. They are compatible with Rabbits, Boars, and Horses.

People born in the Year of the Monkey are the erratic geniuses of the cycle. Clever, skillful, and flexible, they are remarkably inventive and original and can solve the most difficult problems with ease. There are few fields in which Monkey people wouldn't be successful but they have a disconcerting habit of being too agreeable. They want to do things now, and if they cannot get started immediately, they become discouraged and sometimes leave their projects. Although good at making decisions, they tend to look down on others. Having common sense, Monkey people have a deep desire for knowledge and have excellent memories. Monkey people are strong willed but their anger cools quickly. They are most compatible with the Dragon and Rat.

THE YEAR OF THE COCK: 1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981

People born in the Year of the Cock are deep thinkers, capable, and talented. They like to be busy and are devoted beyond their capabilities and are deeply disappointed if they fail. People born in the Cock Year are often a bit eccentric, and often have rather difficult relationship with others. They always think they are right and usually are! They frequently are loners and though they give the outward impression of being adventurous, they are timid. Cock people's emotions like their fortunes, swing very high to very low. They can be selfish and too outspoken, but are always interesting and can be extremely brave. They are most compatible with Ox, Snake, and Dragon.

THE YEAR OF THE DOG: 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982

People born in Dog Years possess the best traits of human nature. They have a deep sense of loyalty, are honest, and inspire other people's confidence because they know how to keep secrets. But Dog People are somewhat selfish, terribly stubborn, and eccentric. They care little for wealth, yet somehow always seem to have money. They can be cold emotionally and sometimes distant at parties. They can find fault with many things and are noted for their sharp tongues. Dog people make good leaders. They are compatible with those born in the Years of the Horse, Tiger, and Rabbit.

THE YEAR OF THE BOAR: 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983

People born in the Year of the Boar are chivalrous and gallant. Whatever they do, they do with all their strength. For Boar Year people, there is no left or right and there is no retreat. They have tremendous fortitude and great honesty. They don't make many friends but they make them for life, and anyone having a Boar Year friend is fortunate for they are extremely loyal. They don't talk much but have a great thirst for knowledge. They study a great deal and are generally well informed. Boar people are quick tempered, yet they hate arguments and quarreling. They are kind to their loved ones. No matter how bad problems seem to be, Boar people try to work them out, honestly if sometimes impulsively. They are most compatible with Rabbits and Sheep.

FEEDBACK ON CHINESE AMERICAN ETHNIC HERITAGE STUDIES HANDBOOK

We would appreciate your completing this brief feedback form after you have reviewed or have used this teacher's guide. Your responses, comments, and suggestions will be most helpful in improving the handbooks.

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Subject Taught:_____ Grade Level:_____

Please give us your evaluation of the handbook by circling an appropriate rating on a scale from 1 to 5 for each of the following items. If you have additional comments, please use the back side of this form.

(1) The handbook is poorly organized	1 2 3 4 5	The handbook is well organized
(2) The handbook is unclear and hard to understand	1 2 3 4 5	The handbook is very clear and understandable
(3) The handbook does not help me in my classroom teaching	1 2 3 4 5	The handbook gives me many ideas and insights for classroom use.
(4) The handbook is dull and uninteresting	1 2 3 4 5	The handbook is very interesting and helpful
(5) I feel very comfortable in using this material	1 2 3 4 5	I do not feel comfortable at all in using this material

(6) How do you think this material could be improved in terms of:

a. Content?

b. Method of Presentation?

c. Relevance to classroom situations?

d. Presentation of Background Information?